

**Deerfield, IL** - U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk will travel to Afghanistan and Pakistan with other members of Congress to evaluate foreign assistance programs in the region. Following October's devastating Pakistani earthquake, Kirk and other Congressional leaders will assess the damage after 70,000 were killed to determine further steps the United States can take to enhance the humanitarian and rebuilding efforts already underway.

As part of this trip, Congressman Kirk will travel to Kabul, Afghanistan where he will meet with Afghan leaders and U.S. troops currently serving in the country. During last year's holiday season, Kirk launched 'Holiday Cards for Troops' and delivered over 1,600 letters to U.S. troops serving in Iraq. The congressman is once again offering to take letters and cards, this time to any of the 11,000 U.S. troops currently serving in Afghanistan.

"Our 'Holiday Cards for Troops' outreach enjoyed a tremendous outpouring of support last year," said Congressman Kirk. "I was honored to deliver all those cards and letters to our men and women in Iraq. This year, we have an opportunity to make sure the families and friends of our military men and women serving in Afghanistan have an opportunity to send a letter from home this holiday season. I will personally deliver the cards and letters to the U.S. Army's central mail processing center in Kabul -guaranteeing their arrival before the holidays. Nothing boosts the morale and spirits of Americans in uniform more than letters from home."

Congressman Kirk's office is accepting letters and cards through Wednesday, November 23. Letters and cards must be properly stamped with first-class postage and addressed in order for them to be delivered. Kirk can only take regular letters and cards to Afghanistan. PLEASE NO PACKAGES! The office is located at 102 Wilmot Rd., Suite 200, Deerfield, IL. 60015.

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